



March 20, 2024

CARYTOWN GATEWAY SIGN - NARRATIVE

The Carytown shopping district in Richmond, Virginia is a unique urban retail environment consisting of a mixture of shops, restaurants, and services with a high ratio of independent small businesses. It is anchored by the historic Cary Court, an art deco-style shopping strip established in 1933, and the Byrd Theatre, an ornate movie palace from 1928. The nine blocks of Cary Street that make up Carytown create a well-established, pedestrian-oriented, gem in the City of Richmond. It is both a tourist destination and a local hotspot.

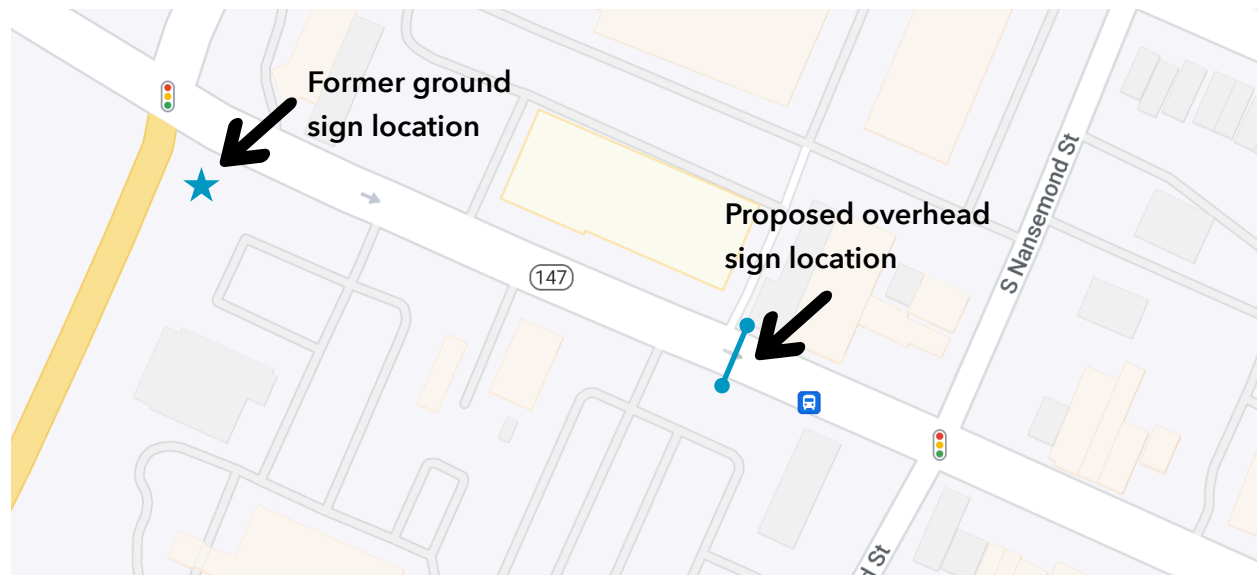


The district has an active merchants association who recognized the need for a gateway sign that would define the starting edge of Carytown. Beginning in 2011, the CMA has made several attempts in partnership with the City of Richmond to erect such a sign, and replace a dilapidated wood sign at the corner of Thompson Street and Cary Street. In 2023, this decades-old painted wood sign fell down, and the effort to replace it was intensified.



The CMA prepared a design for a ground sign as a replacement, but the review process established that the property was owned by VDOT, and a permanent sign would not be permitted at this location.

The new proposed design as attached documents describe is an overhead gateway sign, with supporting posts on concrete footings on each side of Cary Street between the Thompson and Nansemond Street intersections. The sign will be two-sided to address both car and pedestrian viewers. It will be lit with a combination of neon tubes and LED concealed cabinet lighting. It uses a steel structure concealed by a pre-finished aluminum cabinet, supported with steel cables to the posts.



The proposed location aligns the sign with a gap in the building street frontage on the north side of Cary Street and along a planted strip at the Kroger parking lot west of a bus stop on the south side. The location allows cars making a turn from the Thompson Street entrance to have a gradual approach before passing under the sign.

The Carytown Merchants Association will hold a maintenance plan contract with Wellcraft Mfg, the maker of the sign, for annual re-furbishment and repair as needed, including lighting replacement. The CMA has communicated throughout the design effort with the owner of International Shopping Center and the property manager of Carytown Exchange, directly adjacent neighbors, and both are in support of the gateway sign.

Project Address: 3507 W Cary Street, Richmond, VA 23221

General contractor: Messer Contracting, LLC, 11123 Cauthorne Rd, Glen Allen, VA 23059

Sign Contractor: Wellcraft Mfg, 2113B N. Hamilton St. Richmond VA 23230

CMA Contact: Kelley Banks, Reg. Architect VA #0401016476, 2707 E Broad St, Richmond, VA 23223\